

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

AN ETHICAL SYMPOSIUM: Being a Series of Papers Concerning Medical Ethics and Etiquette from the Liberal Standpoint. (D. P. Putnam's Sons.)

A volume in Medical Ethics having already been published by an advocate of the Conservative school, it has been thought right by the Society for the Prevention of the Re-enactment in the State of New-York of the Present Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association, "to meet it with a presentation of the Liberal side of the question. Hence this book, in which eleven physicians give their reasons for desiring a reform of the medical code of ethics and etiquette." The bone of contention, or at least the principal cause of quarrel, is, as the public know, the question of consultation with what is so-called "regulars" and "irregulars," and this means in particular homoeopathists. The old school, bent upon consistency at any price, hold that the life of a patient is as nothing in comparison with the rigid maintenance of professional etiquette. They declare it necessary for every doctor, no matter what the circumstances, to refuse to consult with an "irregular." The Liberal school of physicians, on their part, hold, as stated by Dr. Ely in this volume, that "the time has come when the question should be left to the discretion of the physician; that, in brief, it is not practicable or wise for the State Medical Society to attempt to restrict its members from thinking and acting in ethical matters which lie above the plane of civil law and about the prosperity of which we now find our best men at variance, as they do honorable and proper." The public view of this controversy is that the first was very explicitly stated. It is to the effect that the first duty of the physician is to his patient, and that anything of ethics or etiquette which interferes with that duty ought to be abandoned. As to the assertion of the old-school doctors, that the public are not competent to understand the issue, perhaps it is not necessary to say much. It is clearly not possible to put out of count the whole body of patients, when a question is up for discussion which concerns them so vitally. The Liberal school have public opinion with them, beyond a doubt, and in this case it does not happen that the majority are many. In matters of common-sense the public are, in fact, "almost always trustworthy judges, and this is precisely such a method. Some of the essayists in this volume go so far as to advocate the abolition of medical code altogether. Perhaps that is too radical a measure to be undertaken immediately, though, as is here pointed out, the code has already ceased to be much more than an idle make-believe, as regards many important points. The natural presumption is that the Liberal school will carry the day, because, if they should not be able to compel their opponents to abandon what they believe to be false and mischievous position, they can always render the code a dead letter by disregarding it, and acting upon their own convictions of right and justice.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

A pretty little edition of Southey's "Life of Nelson," with the fascinating illustrations by Burket Foster, has lately been issued by Roberts Brothers. It forms one of the volumes of their Classic Series. Another lately published volume of this series contains Maria Edgeworth's "Classic Tales." These books are neatly bound, well printed and of convenient size, and promise to be of value to the younger generation, for whose pleasure too much sickly trash is printed in these days.

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